

VZCZCXR05871
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1500 1241440
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041440Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1023
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001500

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PM CHIEF OF STAFF DISCUSSES SECTARIAN
INCLUSIVENESS, IRANIAN INFLUENCE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel V. Speckhard for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Chief of Staff Dr. Tariq Abdullah commented on steps to improve the government's sectarian inclusiveness and the Iraqi perspective on Iranian attempts to exert influence in an April 29 meeting with the Deputy Chief of Mission. DCM reviewed Section 607 authority as a useful tool to assist the GOI meet specific needs. End Summary.

GOVERNMENT SECTARIAN INCLUSIVENESS

¶2. (C) Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) opened the conversation by asking about the pending cabinet reshuffle. Dr. Tariq said they were in the selection phase and hoped to announce the new ministers in the near future. DCM then asked for Dr. Tariq's views on the government's broader campaign to promote inclusiveness, pointing out that we recognize the effort the government has made, but that de-Ba'athification and constitutional review seem to have stalled. Dr. Tariq said that they do not have problems with Sunnis, only with Vice President Al-Hashimi, who "has some sort of complex." In fact, they have set up a six person weekly meeting between Dawa and the Iraqi Islamic Party to address Sunni issues, with Dr. Tariq in the lead for Dawa.

¶3. (C) DCM commended Dr. Tariq on this effort, but pressed the need for inclusiveness among his circle of advisors. Dr. Tariq noted that there was not a single Dawa member among the political advisors. For some time, he said, Prime Minister Maliki has been trying to recruit a personal friend from the Iraqi Islamic Party to be an advisor, but that person fears being identified as part of the process, of being too close to the PM. Dr. Tariq was exploring the idea of allowing him to work indirectly, from home.

ALLIANCES IN FALLUJAH

¶4. (C) Dr. Tariq commented that a Sadrists and Al Qaeda-in-Iraq (AQI) alliance was being formed in the Fallujah area. Sadrists allow AQI safe passage to attack MNF-I forces, on the understanding that the Sadrists can withdraw through AQI territory if attacked by MNF-I.

IRANIAN NSA LARIJANI VISIT TO BAGHDAD

¶5. (C) DCM inquired about the April 29 visit by Iranian National Security Advisor Larijani. Dr. Tariq said the discussion was routine, with the Iranians giving open ended support for the Prime Minister. DCM pointed out that the

best way for Iran to support the GOI is through official channels. Dr. Tariq agreed, but noted that Iran will never give up their grassroots approach. "Their policy in the region is based on that approach, which was a proven success for them in Lebanon," he said. While they are copying that approach to Iraq, Iraq is different than Lebanon, he stated. Dr. Tariq observed that although they seem to have temporary success with that approach because of current circumstances, in the long run it will not work well here. Ultimately, said Dr. Tariq, if the Iraqi government is strong, the Iraqi people will never allow external interference. Iraqis have a different attitude about this than other Arabs, he asserted, because Iraqi Shia view themselves as the "head" of the Shia faith, and they don't want Iran to usurp that role.

SECTION 607 AGREEMENTS

¶6. (C) DCM outlined the advantages of Section 607 authorization agreements to Dr. Tariq, who was intrigued. DCM agreed to supply sample agreements for him to review. DCM also explained that the first step should be a letter from the PM to the Ambassador stating that the GOI would like to enter into Section 607 negotiations, and promised to provide a draft letter.

SPECKHARD